PFD Suggestions 09-10

1. Agree with your partner on a thesis that you will carry through the debate.

2. Listen for contradictions and faulty assumptions/generalizations.

3. Control your volume and rate--increasing volume and rate suggests you’re being defensive.

4. Stay calm and composed no matter how your opponents are acting.

5. Use little or no debate jargon. Keep the language concise and conversational.

6. Keep feet flat or crossed at ankles if seated.

7. Put your pen down before you begin speaking. Don’t spin your pen while someone is speaking.

8. Know the rules and adhere to them. Take a copy of them with you.

9. Sound persuasive and assertive, not condescending or badgering.

10. Script as much as you can, and practice so you can speak instead of reading.

11. Write two versions (long and short) of your cases.

12. Always start your speeches with some version of your thesis.

13. In crossfire, speak at a diagonal, so you can see the opponent and the judge.

14. Don’t dominate or be dominated in crossfire. Don’t hog time unless opponents just don’t talk.

15. Avoid overly harsh language: liar, stupid argument, racist, etc. Don’t bash anyone!

16. Definitely script your last shot, and stick to it unless you have to deviate because of something that became apparent in the debate.

17. Don’t say “moving on down” or “moving to our case.” Say “we suggest” or “we contend that…”

18. Don’t make points in crossfire--ask or answer, don’t make a speech.

19. Don’t fade out at the end of your speech--finish strong!

20. Take the vocalized pauses (“like” and “you know”) out of your vocabulary.

21. Don’t ask a question too close to the end of time for questioning.

22. Eye contact with the judge is critical.

23. Unbutton your suit jacket when seated. Remember to button up when you stand to speak.

24. Take a little prep time throughout the debate.

25. Whisper very quietly to your partner, and never facially react to opponents’ words.

26. Remember the debate starts in the hall--don’t be too chatty with opponents in front of the judge.

27. Don’t overly fraternize with the judges, but be friendly and receptive to criticism if approached between rounds.

28. Listen carefully to arguments. Your opponents may be misapplying evidence. Example: “over-reliance on low cost foreign labor” does not mean illegal aliens but rather outsourcing to other countries

29. Use external transitions when identifying your contentions (first, second--not additionally, third or finally.

30. Don’t talk about the type of debate you are/aren’t doing. Debate theory isn’t an acceptable strategy in this debate format.

31. Say “vote Pro” or vote “for this resolution”---not affirm. Stay consistent with references to your case position.

32. Use subtle signposting within your speech: When we look at their first argument…

33. Use your opponents’ analogy or metaphor against them, but don’t overdo it. Analogies and anecdotes are appropriate and make the debate more interesting if used cleverly.

34. Say My partner and I contend that….--not me and my partner contend…

35. Stay in control of yourself!!!

36. Stay within the scope of the resolution. Don’t try to deal with too much, and don’t let the opponents side-track the debate with frivolous arguments. Stay focused on your thesis.

37. Don’t talk about burdens or uniqueness, but do constantly try to advance your advocacy.

38. Don’t say opponents’ names unless you ascertain that one is significantly weaker than his partner, and you want to specifically address questions to that individual in grand crossfire.

39. Stay positive, compassionate, congenial, and analytical. Your opponents will give you plenty to say if you will listen carefully. Compare the opposing theses.

40. This kind of debate is about being reasonable and knowledgeable about the topic area.

Your judges really shouldn’t be expected to flow.

41. When opposing statistics or case studies are offered, you must discredit the opponents’ stats or show why your stats/case studies are superior.

42. Say the resolution in each of the constructive speeches as well as the final focus.